4-H

Review Report

Preserving Traditional Values in New Ways

British Columbia
Provincial 4-H Council

Ministry of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Food

Bc
B6502
J Fish
1990
c.2

The 4-H Program in British Columbia has a long and distinguished history. The organization has introduced many young people to activities that present opportunities for lifelong development. Successful individuals throughout British Columbia, in agribusiness and in other walks of life, have benefited personally from their affiliation with the 4-H Program. Specific training provided by the 4-H Program and the approach to farming emphasized by its dedicated volunteers have promoted excellence in farming practice. In this way, the 4-H Program has contributed to the growth and vitality of British Columbia's agri-food sector.

Objectives

The objectives of the 4-H Program can be summarized as knowledge, leadership, citizenship, and personal development for youth and volunteer adults.

The Ministry's involvement in the 4-H Program, in relation to it's mandate, may be summarized as follows:

To meet the needs of B.C.'s rural and farm youth and adults by:

1. Providing leadership in extension programs for youth.
2. Assisting the growth of the 4-H Program at all levels.
3. Providing leadership skill development and training opportunities.
4. Enhancing agriculture, fisheries, and food production, agricultural awareness, community development, and leadership of rural and agricultural organizations.

4-H Extension Concept

The 4-H Program is an agricultural extension leadership training program, for both youth and volunteer adults. As such, the concept of leadership by volunteers is inherent to the 4-H Program.

Present Resources

The Youth Development Program utilizes the following Ministry resources:

6.5 staff positions (including salaries and benefits)
$70,000 operating funds
$50,000 grant to 4-H
Administrative support throughout the province
Vehicles, equipment and facilities.

It has been estimated that the Ministry presently contributes in excess of $500,000 directly or in kind to the 4-H Program annually.

New Challenges and Opportunities

Today, the 4-H Program is facing new challenges and opportunities including:

* A changing marketplace and rapid developments in agricultural technology that affect the ways farmers approach production.
* New demographic and social conditions that have an impact on 4-H member recruitment, and projects needed.
* In an age of computers, videos and other media, traditional teaching tools are being questioned.
* Greater awareness of ecological issues and a renewed concern about the use of the planet's resources are leading to more public interest in farming practices and sustainable use of resources.

93-00512/

4-H Program Review

(a) Terms of Reference

The specific terms of reference of the 4-H Program Review were to:

> "Prepare recommendations for the long term relationship and management system between the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and the 4-H Program."

(b) Consultation Process

The consultation process took place from December 1, 1991 to April 30, 1992, and included direct meetings with the B.C. 4-H Provincial Council, B.C. 4-H Foundation, Youth Development Program staff, Ministry staff and other interested parties.

Discussions within the 4-H Program were led by each of the seven provincial council representatives (one per 4-H region).

Feedback from other provinces and provincial 4-H agencies was sought and received by mail.

The 4-page leaflet "Preserving Traditional Values in New Ways" was used as the basis for discussion on the issues.

(c) Options Presented During Consultation

The following three options were chosen as the basis for discussion during the consultation process:

Option 1: Provincial 4-H "Council-Run" 4-H Program

- 4-H Program to take over full ownership of the 4-H Program in B.C. managing all aspects including programs, publications, staff, etc.
- Funding to be derived from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and other sources.

Option 2: Provincial 4-H Council and Ministry Partnership

- 4-H Program to establish its own office with an Executive Director and take on more program administration, as well as fund raising initiatives and sponsorship development.
- Ministry to adjust staff support to enhance program development and delivery, putting more emphasis on program resources and leadership training.
- A formal agreement to be put in place and the Ministry's grant to 4-H increased to reflect the 4-H Program's expanded role in administration.
- A "Key Leader" program to be fully supported by the 4-H Program and the Ministry.
- The 4-H Provincial Council restructured to accommodate an expanded management role.

Option 3: Maintain existing relationship between the 4-H Program and the Ministry.

- Change and progress takes place as resources provide, recognizing that B.C. is considered to have one of the strongest and most innovative provincial 4-H organizations.

(d) Consultation Conclusions

- Broad support was expressed for continued direct involvement of the Ministry with the B.C. 4-H Program.
- Suggestion of changes in existing relationships between the 4-H Program and the Ministry is threatening to the 4-H Program.
- The 4-H Program is cautiously receptive to a greater involvement in and responsibility for management and administration in the 4-H Program.
- 4-H Program participants and Ministry staff expressed concerns about the potential for overloading of volunteers with program administration duties.
- Greater integration of Youth Development Program staff with other Ministry operations was favored, although some felt it may detract from staff's current roles.
- There was agreement on the need for specific Youth Development Program staff to focus on the areas of leadership training, program development and program materials.
- There is strong support for the need for a formal agreement between the Ministry and the 4-H Program.
- Strong support was expressed for implementing and training "Key Leaders".
- 4-H Provincial Council establishing their own office with administrative staff independent of the Ministry was received with interest by some and with reluctance by others.
- Most 4-H Program participants in B.C. were unaware of the details of the 4-H Program's relationship with the Ministry. Thus, suggestions for change were not well understood and generally regarded negatively.
- Maintaining the status quo is generally regarded as not being in the best interests of the 4-H Program or the Ministry because it does little to prepare the 4-H Program for the challenges of the future. It is, however, viewed as a "safe" alternative by some within the 4-H Program.

Recommendations and Proposed Actions

(1) Administration

For the purpose of this report, administration means "the responsibility for and the performance of routine, repetitive tasks needed for the ongoing operation of the 4-H Program" and includes enrollments, mailing and mailing lists, statistics, program identity, managing program funds, etc.

Recommendation:

The Ministry should continue to encourage and expect the 4-H Program to assume greater responsibility for administration.

Rationale:

Ministry involvement in the administration of the 4-H Program is extensive, especially at the provincial level. It is essential that the 4-H Program achieve an "identity" separate from the Ministry, an end that cannot be achieved unless the 4-H Program is more independent. Changes in this regard must be made in consideration of 4-H Program continuity, availability of resources and volunteer training.

Recommended Actions:

(a) Continue current initiatives to "pass on" administration such as the district awards program coordination, district promotions coordination, and leader registration process.
(b) Streamline enrollment by enhancing computer technology for administrative purposes.
(c) Cooperate with the B.C. 4-H Provincial Council in the preparation of a five year strategic plan addressing the transfer of specific administrative responsibilities currently performed by Ministry staff for the 4-H Program.

(2) Management

For the purpose of this review, management means "the process of determining objectives and priorities, assessing alternatives and undertaking a course of action based upon the application of scarce resources." and includes strategic planning, setting program priorities, budgeting and financial management, personnel management, corporate identity, etc.

Recommendations:

The Ministry should transfer all aspects of management of the 4-H Program in British Columbia to the B.C. 4-H Provincial Council.

Rationale:

Ministry involvement in the management of the 4-H Program is extensive. While such involvement is valuable to and is highly regarded by the 4-H Program, it presents an opportunity for conflict for the Ministry and the 4-H Program. While the Ministry has in recent years encouraged and assisted the 4-H Program to start to establish its own identity, further transfers of administration and management responsibility are needed.

Recommended Actions:

(a) The Ministry and the B.C. 4-H Provincial Council should review the current management functions being performed by the Ministry and prepare short and long term action plans for transferring management responsibilities to the 4-H Program.
(b) Specific management responsibilities currently performed by the Ministry that can be easily accommodated by the 4-H Program should be transferred as soon as possible.
(c) Consistent with (a) above, the 4-H Program must take steps to more clearly establish its own identity, and be prepared to represent it's own interests independent of those of the Ministry.

(3) Ministry - 4-H Program Relationship

Recommendation #1:

The Youth Development program should be integrated into a more broadly-based Human Resource Development Program.

Recommendation #2:

The Human Resources Development Program should be integrated into the business of the Farm Management Branch and the Three Agriculture Division Regions.

Rationale:

One method of improving industry capability is by "investing in people" which requires devoting program resources to human resource development. The combination of youth development and

human resource development is compatible since the 4-H Program has traditionally focused on human resource development. The Farm Management Branch will be encouraged to broaden its role into farm family goal and priority setting, family and business management, leadership training, labour management and employee relations.

The 4-H Program relies on the support and resources available through district and regional Ministry offices. For the most part, Youth Development Program staff have limited their program activity to the 4-H Program, and regional extension staff (e.g. - district agriculturists) have not, with some exceptions, taken an active role in the district and regional 4-H Program.

Key factors in developing staffing options were - staff integration with other Ministry staff and programs; providing career path options for Youth Development Program staff; and, maximizing skills and expertise of staff in program development, program delivery and leadership training.

Recommended Actions:

(a) Reassign the entire Youth Development Program to a Human Resources Development Unit in the Farm Management Branch.
(b) Director, Farm Management Branch to develop a Human Resources Development Program in consultation with the three Regional Directors.
(c) Extend the terms of auxiliary staff in the Youth Development Program until the staffing requirements for the Human Resource Development Program are determined.

Recommendation #3:

The B.C. 4-H Provincial Council and the Ministry should enter into a formal agreement that clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of each party and the level and specific elements of support from each.

Rationale:

As an evolving and new relationship is forged between the Ministry and the B.C. 4-H Provincial Council, it is important to ensure clarity by having well defined responsibilities. A formal agreement will establish the basis of accountability upon which a conditional grant can be based.

Recommended Actions:

(a) The Ministry and B.C. 4-H Provincial Council should prepare and sign a formal agreement at the earliest date possible.
(b) The contents of the formal agreement should be communicated to ensure that Ministry staff and 4-H Program volunteers are fully aware of the terms and conditions.

Recommendation #4:

The Ministry and 4-H Program should embrace the development, and implementation of a "Key" leader program at the district level.

Rationale:

4-H clubs and district council programs would benefit from the support of a well trained Key Leader volunteer, with a specific job description. These volunteers, (who are not leaders with a specific 4-H club), would provide training, advice, and administrative support; and be the link between the Ministry and the district 4-H Program.

Recommended Actions:

(a) Implement a "Key Leader" program at district council level to provide training and support to district 4-H program, new 4-H clubs and new 4-H leaders.
(b) The Ministry and the 4-H Program to be jointly responsible for the orientation, training, performance planning and review of Key leaders.
(c) District 4-H Councils to be responsible for the recruitment of Key leaders.

Implementation

a) Communication of Ministry decisions

An effective communication plan will be required to inform Ministry staff and 4-H community about the results of this review.

b) Responsibility for Implementation

Coordination of follow-up actions is to become the responsibility of the Human Resources Development Program (including the Youth Development Program) effective immediately.

Acknowledgements

The Review Committee wishes to acknowledge the information provided by the many dedicated 4-H volunteers, friends of 4-H, and Ministry staff who assisted in the Review.

The contribution by the many Ministry staff, individuals from organizations associated with the 4-H Program, 4-H members, parents, and volunteer leaders was greatly appreciated. The dedication and concern shown was reflective of the high esteem in which the 4-H Program is held.

We especially wish to thank the B.C. 4-H Provincial Council representatives for their time and energy involving 4-H leaders in this process. Special thanks to Suzanne Skanning, Ann Siddall, Jenny Visser, Laurie Takoff, Susan Hoszouski, Barb MacLean, Wendy Porter, and Sharon Kerr of the B.C. 4-H Provincial Council.

4-H Review Project Team:

* Terry Dever, P. Ag. (Chairman) Regional Director, North Central Region
* Marney James, P.Ag., Manager, Horticulture Program, South Coastal Region
* Gordon Bryant, P. Ag., Supervisor, Youth Development Programs, Southern Interior Region

May 28, 1992